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FROM USMISSION UNESCO

STATE FOR IO/UNESCO DOUG ROHN, IO/S LISA SPRATT

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: UNESCO: GENEVA GROUP SETS WORKPLAN FOR COMING MONTHS

¶1. This is a guidance request, please see Para 2.

¶2. AT THE JANUARY 12 GENEVA GROUP MEETING, CHAIRED BY THE UK, PARTICIPANTS GAVE PROVISIONAL AGREEMENT TO THE DRAFT WORK PLAN (SEE PARA 5) FOR THE COMING MONTHS. THIS IS TO BE A ROLLING DOCUMENT THAT WILL BE DISCUSSED AT FUTURE MEETINGS AND UPDATED AS NECESSARY. AT THE NEXT MEETING (FEBRUARY 13, 2006), GENEVA GROUP MEMBERS WILL SEEK TO CONFIRM MAIN WORK THEMES AND IDENTIFY MORE PRECISE OBJECTIVES, AS WELL AS SUGGEST OTHER AREAS OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE GROUP. IF DEPARTMENT HAS GUIDANCE TO OFFER ON GENEVA GROUP WORK PLAN, POST REQUESTS THAT IT BE CONVEYED IN ADVANCE OF THE FEBRUARY 13 GENEVA GROUP MEETING.

¶3. IT WAS AGREED THAT DECENTRALIZATION IS CLEARLY AN ISSUE OF CONCERN FOR THE GROUP. AMBASSADOR OLIVER STRESSED THAT DECENTRALIZATION MUST BE ACCCOMPANIED BY INCREASED ACCOUNTABILITY BY FIELD OFFICES, AS WELL AS TRANSPARENCY. IN THE RUN-UP TO THE 174TH EXECUTIVE BOARD (MARCH-APRIL 2006), MEMBERS AGREED, THE GENEVA GROUP WILL DECIDE WHAT SPECIFIC GUIDANCE THE EXECUTIVE BOARD SHOULD GIVE TO THE SECRETARIAT ON DECENTRALIZATION.

¶4. FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE GENEVA GROUP:

FEBRUARY 13, 2006: HANS D'ORVILLE, CHIEF OF THE OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING, HAS AGREED TO DISCUSS PREPARATIONS FOR THE C/4 AND C/5 (MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGY AND BUDGET DOCUMENTS), AS WELL AS SISTER, THE SYSTEM BY WHICH UNESCO TRACKS THE RESULTS OF ITS PROGRAMS.

MARCH 2006: THE CANADIAN EXTERNAL AUDITOR -- MS. NANCY CHENG -- WILL BE VISITING PARIS; AT THIS POINT, HER FINAL REPORT WILL BE OFFICIAL. THE CANADIAN DELEGATION WILL ARRANGE A MEETING FOR MS. CHENG WITH THE GENEVA GROUP.

EXECUTIVE BOARD PREPARATIONS: ALSO IN MARCH, THE GENEVA GROUP WILL MEET WITH EXECUTIVE BOARD SECRETARY PARSURAMEN TO DISCUSS THE THREE ORGANS AND THE FORTHCOMING EXECUTIVE BOARD. ANOTHER GENEVA GROUP MEETING WILL BE HELD IMMEDIATELY BEFORE THE MEETING OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS ON FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS. EXTRA-BUDGETARY FUNDING WILL BE DISCUSSED WHEN THE EXECUTIVE BOARD SECRETARIAT ISSUES PAPERS FOR THE 174TH SESSION, EITHER

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AT THE MEETING THAT WILL TAKE PLACE IMMEDIATELY BEFORE THE BOARD OR AT THE MEETING WITH PARSURAMEN.

¶5. TEXT OF THE PROPOSED GENEVA GROUP WORK PLAN (2006):

Objectives

At the time of the submission of our last report to Geneva, we agreed the following broad objectives for the work of the group:

Continue to support and monitor the Director-General's reforms;

Ensure that the principle of results-based management is fully applied to the programme and budget for 2006 - 2007 with further concentration and prioritisation of the programme, the introduction of sunset clauses for all new activities and the phasing out of lower priority activities;

Ensure that the decentralisation and new staff strategies to be presented at the April Executive Board will provide the most effective means to achieve agreed objectives;

Follow closely the implementation of the recommendations of the External Auditor concerning the 2002-2003 biennium which were presented in 2004 and follow up on past recommendations;

Continue to follow closely developments relating to extra

budgetary funding, taking into particular account the effectiveness and relevance to the high priority programmes;

Ensure the adoption by the General Conference and implementation by the Secretariat of those recommendations made by the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Relations between the Three Organs which meet the Geneva Group's objectives, including the issue of the loss of voting rights at the General Conference for Member States in arrears.

Ongoing Work

We are continuing to pursue the above objectives. Our current principal areas of focus are:

evaluation/oversight. We had a useful meeting with John Parsons in December. After that meeting the IOS completed a questionnaire on oversight in UNESCO (sent to Geneva). There will be a number of areas for the Group to watch in coming months.

decentralisation. The subject of our next meeting, including a presentation from Ms Lamia Salman, on 12 January. This will include the new procedures for the production of country and regional strategies. Results-based management and the C4/C5 processes. We hope to have an update on this in February from Hans d'Orville.

Governance. The possible subject of a future meeting, perhaps in March with Mr. Parsuramen. The Geneva Group can look at issues such as the working methods of the Board.

Before the next Board we may, therefore, aim for the above three meetings and include, or have an additional meeting to discuss, issues for the next Executive Board, and finalisation of our next report to Geneva.

Specific Achievements (April-December 2005)

input to Board discussion on RBM, decentralisation, human resources;

considerable input to discussions on the recommendations on the Three Organs;

our influence on the latest C5, including the methodology and format, prioritisation and concentration of programmes, the ceiling of \$610 million, and the special supplementary budget of \$25 million;

General Conference Resolution on the C4.

Specific Work Ahead

Members of the Group will wish to discuss at our next meetings the production of a few specific objectives for action fitting into the above framework. They may wish to highlight other areas of financial management, such as extra-budgetary resources or slowness in budgetary disbursement, where we are not currently concentrating much of our efforts. End Text of the Proposed Geneva Group Work Plan.
Oliver